

Behavioral Health Reform - Frequently Asked Questions, January 2005

1. What is the purpose of behavioral health reform?

Behavioral health reform focuses on serving persons with mental illness closer to their home communities, support systems, family and friends, recognizing that treatment is more successful over the long-term when persons with mental illness are able to interact with loved ones and remain involved in support functions. Funding currently used for inpatient services at the Hastings and Norfolk Regional Centers will be transitioned to develop similar services within communities across the state.

2. What has the Health and Human Services System been doing since passage of the bill in April 2004?

LB 1083 directs the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS) to prepare and submit a Behavioral Health Implementation Plan to the Governor and the Legislature on or before July 1, 2004.

HHSS has been working with each of the six Behavioral Health Regions to develop region-specific plans to ensure the appropriate community-based services are in place, ranging from hospital-level care to day treatment programs, in order to produce a comprehensive statewide implementation plan.

HHSS is also reviewing internal changes or processes that need to be in place in order to complete the implementation plan and support future activities. The following internal work teams are in place: Regional Center Transition, Community Services, HHSS Organization, Employment, Housing, Finance, Human Resources, Strategy, Information/Payment, Communications and Academic Support.

3. How are the six Behavioral Health Regions involved?

The six Behavioral Health Regions are providing information in several areas: replacing inpatient services with community services; serving persons ready for discharge from all three Regional Centers; developing emergency services; and expanding or creating community-based services, especially non-residential services. This information will be incorporated into the HHSS Implementation Plan.

4. What is the Behavioral Health Oversight Commission that is created in LB 1083?

Senator Jim Jensen solicited letters of interest from individuals interested in serving on the Behavioral Health Oversight Commission, which will consist of up to 20 members. The member will oversee and support implementation of the Act. As work activities move beyond internal processes to implementation, HHSS will provide monthly reports to the Oversight Commission. HHSS will also involve a wide variety of stakeholders, including consumers, to get input on what is needed for a successful transition of services from Regional Centers to the community.

